



STATE OF DELAWARE

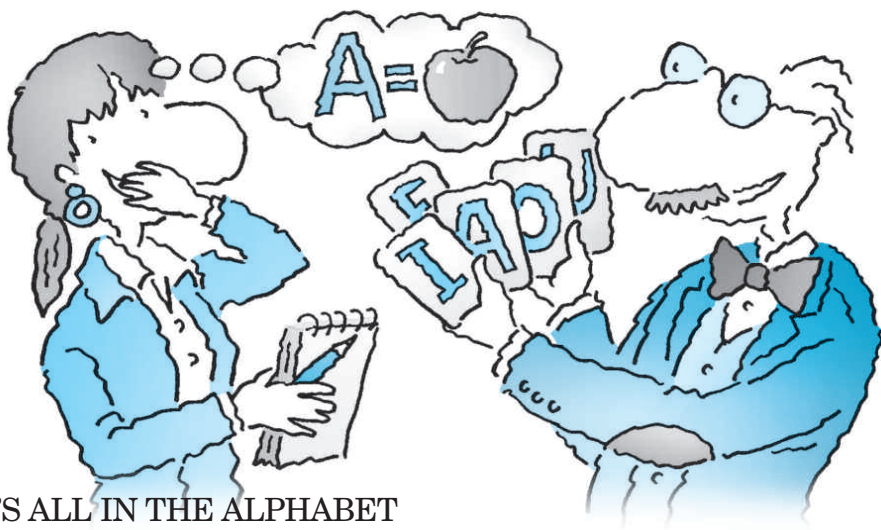
# Life Lines

Provided by the State of Delaware Group Health Insurance Program for their employees and their families

VOL. 28, NO. 6

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

JUNE 2008



IT'S ALL IN THE ALPHABET

## Remember your vowels to stay healthy

**T**hink back to your first spelling lesson. Even though there are only five vowels out of 26 letters (six when you count Y), you can't spell any words without at least one vowel.

Today those six letters can help you remember the keys to health.

- A** **Always** wear seat belts and drive with caution.
- E** **Every** day, get at least 30 minutes of brisk physical activity.
- I** **Include** 2 cups of fruit, 2½ cups of vegetables, and three servings of whole grains in your daily diet. Limit refined foods and animal fat.
- O** **Once a year**, talk to your doctor about preventive screenings you may need for cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.
- U** **Use no tobacco** products of any kind — smoke or smokeless.
- Y** **Your family, friends**, and pets. A loving, supportive social network can help relieve stress and increase your sense of well-being.

## June 9-15 Men's Health Week

**A** great gift for Father's Day (June 15) is a loving reminder to your husband or dad to get health screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, and colon cancer (if he's 50 or older). Most men say they would get their annual rectal exam if reminded to do it.

**Other healthy gifts:** Promise to walk with him two or three times a week; a sampler of nutritious snacks (fruit, sugarless gum, low-fat granola bars); elastic fitness bands — great for Dads who travel.

## Summer wardrobe tips



See page 7...

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## eating well

PICNIC PERFECT

### Stop the “summer bug” caused by food-borne illnesses

**F**ollow these food safety tips to help stop the bacteria that cause vomiting, diarrhea, and the other intestinal symptoms associated with food-borne illnesses:

- **Discard any food that has been left out longer than two hours.** Bacteria begin to grow quickly after two hours.
- **Take just enough food** so you don't have to worry about leftovers.
- **Thoroughly chill any pre-cooked foods** before you put them in a cooler.
- **Be extra careful with salads that use mayonnaise.** Cool cooked ingredients (like chicken, eggs, or potatoes) to 40°F before mixing with mayonnaise.

- **Eat take-out foods like fried chicken within two hours,** or buy them ahead of time and chill before putting in coolers.
- **Put the cooler inside your air-conditioned car, not the trunk.** Keep it in the shade at the picnic site. Pack foods that you plan to eat first on top to cut down on openings and closings. Use a separate cooler for drinks.
- **Never put cooked meat on a surface that held raw meat** unless the surface has been thoroughly washed with soap and water.
- **Cook meats to the proper temperature:** burgers (well-done), ribs, and hot dogs to 160°F; whole chicken to 180°F; ground poultry or chicken breasts to 170°F.

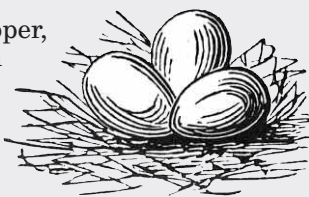
Sources: Iowa State University Extension Food Safety Project; National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

#### HEART-SMART OMELETTE

### Only 138 calories and just a trace of fat

Whisk together three egg whites, salt, pepper, and two tablespoons of low-fat milk. Heat in a skillet sprayed with olive oil until just set.

Top with a half cup each of chopped spinach, tomatoes, mushrooms, or your other favorite vegetables.



#### EGGPLANT

### A purple powerhouse

**T**he deep purple skin of eggplant is a great source of antioxidants and other disease-fighting nutrients that may help protect against cancer.

But the disease-fighting properties of this versatile vegetable don't stop there. Eggplant also contains soluble fiber, the type that can help lower LDL “bad” cholesterol.

Source: Cindy Farricker, MS, RD, CDE, Registered Dietitian, Dream Dinners, Inc.

#### EATING-WELL RECIPE

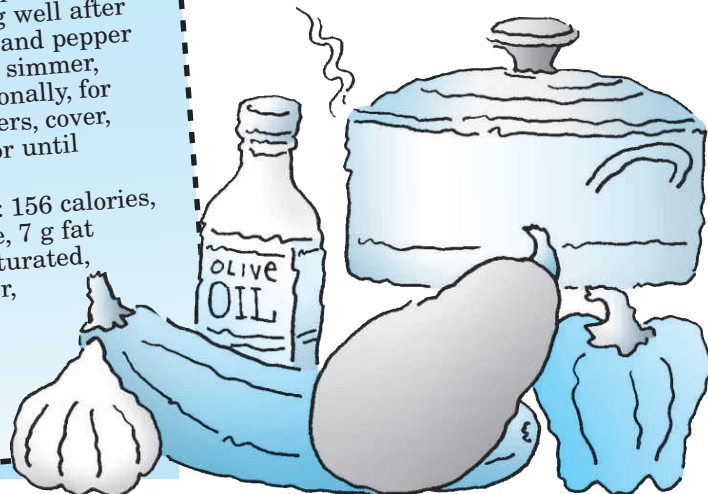
##### Ratatouille

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups slivered onion
- 2 medium red bell peppers, cored & cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1½ lbs. eggplant, cut into ¾-inch cubes
- 1 lb. zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 lbs. Roma tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 2 tsp. chopped garlic
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil (or 1 Tbsp. dried)
- 2 Tbsp. drained capers (optional)

In a Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add onions and sauté 5 minutes. Add bell pepper, eggplant, zucchini, and tomatoes, stirring well after each addition. Add garlic, salt, and pepper and stir to combine. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 25 minutes. Add basil and capers, cover, and simmer 5 to 10 minutes, or until eggplant is tender.

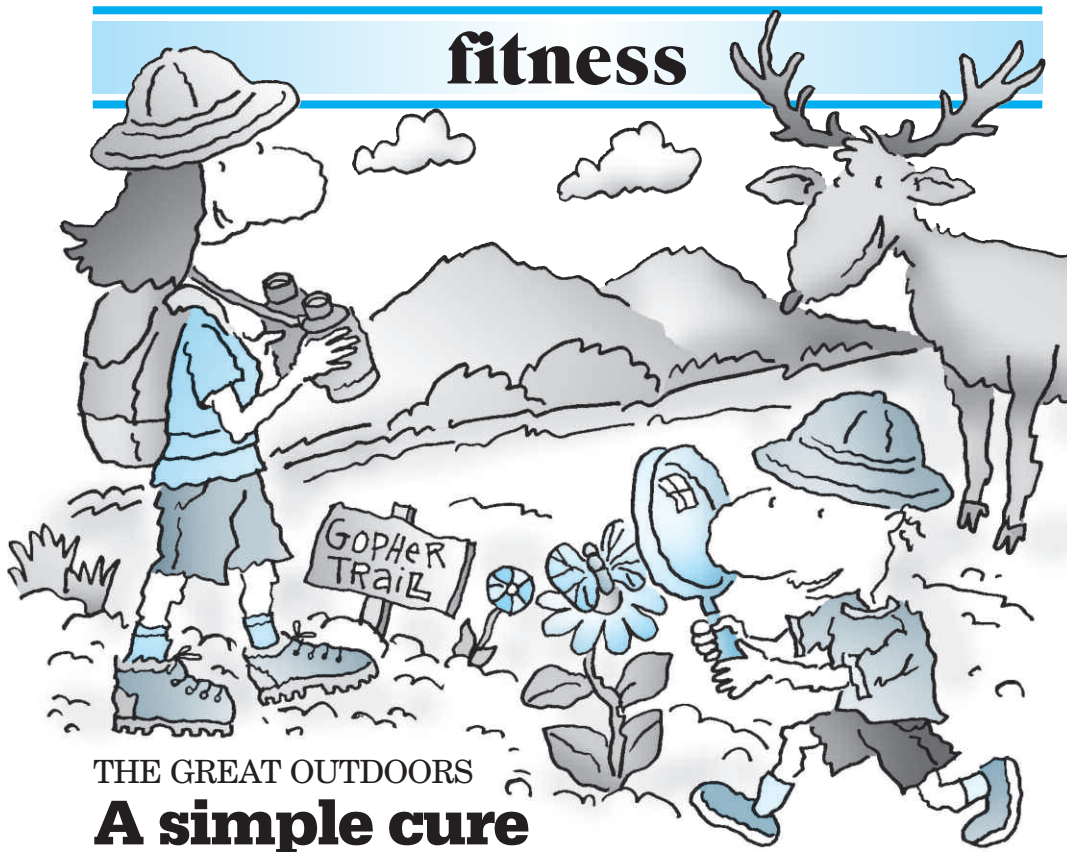
Serves 6. Per 1-cup serving: 156 calories, 3 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat (1 g saturated, 5 g monounsaturated, 1 g polyunsaturated), 6 g fiber, 251 mg sodium.

Source: Dream Dinners, Inc.  
dreamdinners.com  
© 2008





## fitness



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

### A simple cure for "Nature Deficit Disorder"

**M**ake it a point to spend some unstructured time outdoors with your kids as often as possible.

Time outdoors may help prevent "Nature Deficit Disorder," a problem identified by Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*.

"When a child is out in nature, all the senses get activated," says Louv. "He is immersed in something bigger than himself, rather than focusing narrowly on one thing, such as a computer screen."

Head for the nearest park, plant and tend a garden, explore a nature trail, or find the perfect view to enjoy a sunset or sunrise.

Take along an "Explorer's Kit" that includes things like a magnifying glass, binoculars, plastic bags for collecting, and a blanket for sitting on the ground or building forts.

The National Wildlife Federation's Website, [www.greenhour.org](http://www.greenhour.org), has information on where to find parks and nature trails close to your home.

Source: National Wildlife Federation

## BODY IMAGE

### Something to reflect on

**I**f body image stops you from being active, take an aerobics, yoga, or other fitness class in a room that has no mirrors.

That way you can focus on what your body is capable of doing from the inside out.

If you can't find a gym or workout studio without mirrors, an exercise DVD you can use at home may be a good way to get started.



## PICK UP THE PACE

### Burn more calories walking

- **Bend your arms to 90 degrees**, but keep your elbows in and don't let your hands cross in front of your chest. Too much side-to-side motion can slow you down.
- **Your thumbs should brush against your waistband** as you swing your arms back and forth.
- **Focus on quicker, not longer steps**. Try to shoot for between 45 and 50 steps every 20 seconds, or about 135 to 150 steps a minute.
- **Stand tall and keep your eyes on the horizon** — avoid looking down.
- **Push off your toes with each stride** and pretend you're showing someone the bottom of your shoes.
- **Walking poles** may help you burn more calories, as well as build arm strength. Some fitness instructors recommend adding light weights to wrists and ankles.

Source: *Walking Magazine's Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness*, by Mark Fenton, former member and coach of the U.S. national racewalking team

## FOOT CARE

### The right shoes and socks

**A** good pair of walking shoes should have a rounded or beveled heel, be flexible through the ball of the foot, and be fairly firm through the arch. Make sure you get shoes that fit well and give your toes some wiggle room. It should not be necessary to "break in" a pair of walking shoes. In case you have a problem with fit, you might not want to walk too far the first time out in a new pair.

To prevent blisters, avoid cotton socks and choose a pair made from a synthetic, breathable material, such as polypropylene or CoolMax®. Socks should also cushion your foot without bunching.

## Doc Talk

### POWER TO THE PATIENT

## Second opinions

**M**y friend called me to ask about his work-up for occasional chest pain.

A local cardiologist recommended that he should have a non-urgent coronary angiography (dye injected into the heart arteries using a small tube inserted at the groin). "I'd like to get a second opinion," he said. "But I don't want to insult my cardiologist." My advice was:

1. **Be open with your first doctor.** Most self-confident doctors won't mind. Being open will allow the doctors to talk with one another.
2. **Choose a physician recommended by a doctor you respect** (your primary care physician, for example) or on the staff of a reputable hospital such as a university teaching hospital.
3. **Make sure your second opinion will be covered** by your health insurance plan.
4. **Ask what records should be obtained before your visit.** If your second opinion doctor wants new tests, getting them before you visit might help save time.
5. **Ask your original doctor to send your relevant records to the second opinion physician.** Obtain any X-ray and ultrasound films and tissue pathology slides related to your current problem and bring them to your visit for review.

At best, second opinions can identify a better course of treatment; at least, you'll have more peace of mind.

**William J. Mayer, MD, MPH**  
Medical Editor

*Do you have a subject you would like the doctor to discuss? E-mail DocTalk@HopeHealth.com.*

### Travel tip

♥ To help prevent motion sickness, sit in the section of a plane or boat where the motion is least felt. That would be the center section over a wing in a plane or the upper deck or forward cabin on a ship. Drive or sit in the front passenger's seat in a car.

Always try to face in the direction you're traveling and focus on a distant stationary object on the horizon (but not if you're driving).

Reading, alcohol, spicy foods, and strong odors like cigarette smoke and diesel fuel may also trigger motion sickness.

*Source: American Academy of Family Physicians*



*When traveling, take a carry-on bag that you can walk with for a mile or so without effort.*

### Swimmer's ear

♥ The safest way to dry ears after swimming, bathing, or showering is with a hair dryer.

Water trapped in the ear canal can cause swimmer's ear, an itchy and sometimes painful condition that can cause ear infections. Removable earplugs like the type worn for hearing protection can also keep moisture out of the ear canal.

Cotton swabs or other objects should never be put into the ear canal.

*Source: American Academy of Otolaryngology*

# Health

*Health Briefs for Busy People*

### The weight debate

♥ Are free weights or machines better for strength training?

"I say buy property on both sides of the fence," says Manny Escalante, Jr., a certified physical trainer and athletic coach.

Machines are a safe way to build base strength and allow for slow, concentrated movements that can be done without a spotter.

Free weights (dumbbells and barbells) force you to lift them and control them at the same time. They more closely resemble everyday activities.

Always use proper safety techniques and take at least 48 hours off to rest your muscles after a strength training session.

### Portion control

♥ When it comes to fruits and vegetables, portion control is easy. A serving is a medium-size piece of fruit, like a tennis ball, or a fist-size amount of vegetables.

For maximum health benefits, eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day and choose from a variety of colors — red, orange, yellow/white, green, and blue/purple.

*Source: Health Promotion Practitioner, July/August 2007*

### Four-letter fitness

♥ The letters in the word SAIL can help you plan a successful fitness program:

**S Simplicity.** A pedometer, for example, is an easy way to track your activity.

**A Accountability.** Keep a journal. It's one of the best ways to stay motivated.

**I Inclusive.** Ask other people to join you. It's more fun.

**L Longevity.** Something you can do 365 days a year.

*Source: Robert Sweetgall, Creative Walking Incorporated*



## At-home teeth whiteners

♥ Over-the-counter teeth whitening products are safe, but it's important to follow the directions and not overuse them.

Bleaching your teeth too much can cause permanent discoloration, gum sensitivity, and damage to the root.

It's best to ask your dentist if you're a good candidate for teeth whitening. The products lighten the color of natural tooth enamel only and not fillings, crowns, bridges, or veneers.

Source: American Dental Association

## Going once, going twice

♥ Save time and clear clutter by handling each piece of paper that comes across your desk no more than two times — once to read it and once to respond to it.

The average person picks up a piece of paper, including mail, faxes, computer printouts, etc. and shuffles it from one pile to another 10 times before it is finally thrown away. For most communications, you can read it and respond to it in one handling. This applies to e-mail, too — when you first read it, choose one of four options to respond: Reply to it, delegate it, file it, pitch it.

## Advanced technology for stress relief

♥ A couple of tennis balls can make an excellent massage tool.

Put two tennis balls all the way into the toes of a sock, then tie the end of the sock so the balls are held tightly together. Lean against a wall with the balls between your back and the wall. Experiment with moving the balls to find the speed and pressure that feels best. You can also do this lying down on the floor.

For a foot massage, just roll a single tennis ball under each foot for a couple of minutes.

Sources: *Acupressure & Reflexology for Dummies*, Cynthia Andrews & Bobbi Dempsey, Wiley Publications; Maureen Moon, American Massage Therapy Association

## FISCAL FITNESS

### Caring for aging parents

Family members have more control — and parents get to make their preferences known — when plans are made to care for aging parents before a crisis occurs. Pro-active steps you can take include:

- **Siblings might get together** and decide to jointly pay the premiums for long-term care insurance because moving their mother in with one of them is not feasible. This transfers high cost of care, either at home or in an assisted living or nursing facility, to a third party.
- **Have the parent(s) move in with one sibling while the others provide financial assistance and respite care.** Caring for an aging parent at home can add \$7,000 or more to household expenses, including transportation, utilities, food, and possibly home remodeling. The cost is much higher if lost wages and retirement plan savings, as a result of caregiving, are included.
- **Encourage your parents to share their financial information with you.** Also know the location of their important documents such as a will, military records, insurance policies, safe deposit box, etc. They may be reluctant to do this. If so, tell them you just want to be ready to help out if needed.
- **To find the Community Office on Aging** located in your parent's neighborhood, visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education, [www.nefe.org](http://www.nefe.org)



## Preventing birth defects

♥ Any woman who can get pregnant needs to get 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

A woman who has enough folic acid in her body before and while she is pregnant is 70% less likely to have a baby with a major birth defect to the brain or spine.

The surest way to get enough folic acid is to take a daily multivitamin containing 400 mcg. Enriched breakfast cereals are another good source. Check nutrition labels to make sure a single serving of the cereal contains the daily requirement of 400 mcg of folic acid.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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## FIRST-AID KIT

### Is yours up to date?

**W**hether you buy one ready made, or put your own together, a well-stocked first-aid kit for a family of four should include:

- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 1 adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets
- 5 antiseptic wipe packets and 1 plastic bottle non-stinging antiseptic wash
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each) and 2 packets of acetaminophen (325 mg each)
- 1 compression wrap
- 1 finger splint
- 1 space (thermal) blanket
- 1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- 1 instant cold compress
- 2 pairs of non-latex gloves
- 2 hydrocortisone ointment packets
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- 1 3-inch wide roller bandage
- 1 4-inch wide roller bandage
- 5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- Oral thermometer (nonmercury/nonglass)
- 2 triangular bandages
- First-aid instruction booklet

Source: The American Red Cross, <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/lifeline/fakit.html>

## AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

### 5-minute after-work stress buster



**W**hen you get home, take a minute to breathe deeply and focus on the present moment only. After you've relaxed completely, recall or picture something positive you did during your workday. Then picture receiving an award to acknowledge your good work.

This exercise will bring the good to mind and put closure on your workday. Continuing to criticize yourself for things that didn't go well can make stress go on through the evening.

Source: *Five Good Minutes in the Evening: 100 Mindful Practices to Help You Unwind from the Day and Make the Most of Your Night*, by Jeffrey Brantley, MD and Wendy Millstine, New Harbinger Publications

## MIND YOUR MANNERS

### Business etiquette you can bank on

1. **Always arrive prepared and on time** for meetings.
2. **If you drink at all, stay sober** at a business party or dinner.
3. **Always check e-mails for proper grammar** and spelling, and try not to send large e-mail attachments.
4. **Avoid using slang**, curse words, or other inappropriate language.
5. **Return phone calls and e-mails promptly** — no longer than 24 hours.
6. **Never send or forward offensive jokes** through e-mail.

Source: *Men's Health* poll of the worst business blunders, September 2007



*Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.*



# take care

## SUMMER WARDROBE TIPS

### What to wear in the sun

**I**n addition to sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses, the proper clothing can help protect your skin from the sun's cancer-causing ultra-violet rays.

Tightly woven fabrics block out the most sun. The more you can see through a fabric when you hold it up to the light, the less protection it provides. Color also plays a role. Dark-colored fabrics block out more sun than lighter ones. Shiny silks and polyesters that reflect the sun can also be protective.

You can also buy sun-protective clothing with an Ultra-violet Protection Factor (UPF) that measures the amount of radiation that penetrates through a fabric and reaches the skin. These garments are typically made from tightly woven, light-colored fabrics that have been treated with a colorless chemical sun block. A UPF between 30 and 49 provides very good protection, while 50 or above is excellent. A loosely knit white T-shirt has a UPF factor of only 7.

Laundry additives (Sun Guard) are also available that provide UV protection that lasts for about 20 washings.

Source: *The Skin Cancer Foundation*



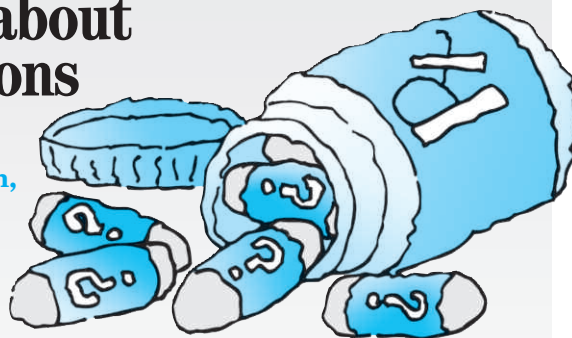
## PRESCRIPTIONS

### Get the facts about your medications

**W**henever you get a new prescription, ask your doctor or pharmacist these questions:

1. What are the brand and generic names?
2. Is a generic available?
3. What am I taking this medication for?
4. Does this new prescription mean I should stop taking any other medications I'm taking now?
5. How do I take the medication? If I need to take it three times a day, does that mean at breakfast, lunch, and dinner or every eight hours?
6. Do I need to take it all, or should I stop when I feel better?
7. How long will I be taking it? Can I get a refill? How often?

Source: *Your Medicine: Play It Safe*, Published by the National Council on Patient Information and Education and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality



“June”

## Health Observances

### Home safety

**F**alls are the number one way people get hurt at home. Safeguard your home by installing nightlights in hallways and lights at the top and bottom of stairs.

Put grab bars in bathtubs and showers. Avoid placing small rugs near the top or bottom of stairs and make sure hand railings go from top to bottom on both sides of the stairs.

Fires, burns, and poison are the other top causes of home injuries. For more information, visit the Home Safety Council at [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).

## Our kids

JUNE 1 THROUGH JULY 4

### Fireworks safety

**E**njoy a professional fireworks display in your community instead of celebrating at home, especially if you have young children.

Seemingly harmless sparklers account for the most eye injuries every year in children under 14, followed by firecrackers and bottle rockets. Visit [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org) for more tips on firework safety.

## Smart Living

Keep your pets indoors on the 4th of July. Dogs and cats have very sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened by fireworks.

# your health matters

## Surf your way to better health today!

**“I completed my online Health Risk Assessment (HRA), participated in a Biometric Health Screening, and learned about my personal health risk behaviors — now what?”** Start surfing the StayWell website! All full-time state, school district, charter school, higher education employees, and pre-65 retirees, as well as spouses and dependents over the age of 18 who are covered under the state group health plan, have unlimited access to the StayWell website by going to <https://delaware.online.staywell.com>.

- View your personalized results.
- Set goals and track progress.
- Establish reminders.
- Search over 1,700 health topics.
- Look up healthy recipes.
- Utilize health calculators and participate in wellness quizzes.
- Stay up-to-date with daily health news.
- Read helpful wellness tips.
- And much more.

Do you have a question regarding your health or need assistance? Contact the StayWell HelpLine at 1-800-926-5455 and speak with a health professional.



### DID YOU KNOW?

A 175-pound person burns approximately 400 calories per hour while mowing the lawn. The more you weigh, the more calories you burn. To find out how many calories you can burn performing a variety of physical activities, visit the “Calorie Burn Rate Calculator” link found under the “Health Tools” section of the StayWell website.

### HEALTHY RECIPE

**Turkey Macaroni Chili**  
(for more great recipes, visit the StayWell website)

#### Ingredients

- 1½ teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- ½ cup carrots, finely chopped
- 1 cup onions, chopped
- 8 ounces ground turkey

- 1 19-ounce can tomatoes, crushed
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1½ cups potatoes, peeled and diced
- ¾ cup canned red kidney beans, drained
- ¾ cup corn kernels
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons dried oregano
- 1½ teaspoons dried basil
- ⅓ cup elbow macaroni

#### Directions

In a large nonstick saucepan, heat oil over medium heat; add garlic, carrots, and onions and cook for five minutes or until softened, stirring occasionally. Add turkey, stirring to break it up; cook for two minutes or until no longer pink. Add tomatoes, stock, potatoes, beans, corn, tomato paste, chili powder, oregano, and basil; bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Bring to a boil again and add macaroni; cook for 12 minutes or until pasta is tender but firm.

Serves eight.

*Each serving contains about 240 calories, 6 grams fat (23 percent calories from fat), 0 mg cholesterol, and 552 mg sodium.*